

## English Race Horses.

The more that racing is looked into and thought about the more does it become apparent that too much stress must not be laid on the make and shape of race horses. They go in all forms, is an old saying, and it is not necessary to turn far for an illustration of that rule, as the national race, the Derby, which will engross a world-wide attention for the next three weeks, will boast of competitors of all sizes, and I may say of all shapes. There is the enormous filly Queen Adelaide and the narrow, pony-shaped St. Medard; the long, low, powerfully built Beauchamp and the tall, lightish bodied Richmond. There will be other big ones and other small ones as well, and several of just the medium size that, as a rule, win the majority of the races.

I have personally no great liking for big horses. My favorite standard would be 15 hands 3 inches for horses and 15 hands 2 inches for mares, and I feel sure the greatest number of winners in the last half-century have been near that average. At the same time I am quite open to conviction that the greatest horses of that time have been nearer 16 hands 2 inches than 15 hands 2 inches high, and if asked to give the height of the best horse to be seen in the next fifty years I should certainly say from 16 hands to 16 hands 2 inches high, probably the latter. A great trainer suggested to me a few months back that the Jockey Club should give a time race or two of great value so that we might be able to form some guide as to the respective merits of race horses at different periods, and considering the perfection to which chronography had been brought, he was quite prepared to believe in the American plan for the purpose of obtaining records. We may call this and that the best horse ever known, but we have no certain data to rely upon, and all that can be urged is the style in which certain horses have won their races.

Bay Middleton won his Derby so easily that there was a chance before he pulled up of his overpowering Robinson and running into Epsom, and his mighty stride was thought by Admiral Rous to be different to anything he had ever seen in a race horse. The Flying Dutchman was so superior to the majority of other horses that it was found impossible to try him, and Fobert explained to me himself that when he did try him he was up one side of a dip or hill on Middleham Moor while his opponents were coming down the other. Gladiateur had very much the same sort of way of treating contemporaries, and it would not be difficult to name half a dozen more that were out of all comparison right away from horses of their respective years. Two of the above named, Bay Middleton and Gladiateur, were very big horses, the first being 16 hands 1 1/2 inches high, and the French horse 16 hands 1 inch high. The Flying Dutchman, I think, was exactly 16 hands high, and among the notable giants of different times might be noticed Blacklock, a horse of great size, so Orton tells us, and excepting his head, which was coarse, possessing splendid symmetry. Touchstone was 16 hands 1 inch high, Melbourne about the same, Ratanplan and Fisherman the same, and Mortimer must have been, I should say, 16 hands 2 inches high. Among such grand big ones, however, breeders will say what a lot of great helplessness there have been at the same time! I am quite ready to grant that in looking over, say a lot of yearlings, it is much safer to prognosticate that the big, overgrown looking ones will be worthless than that they will make racehorses.

The great point of all is, how they shape. A big one that seems in labor to get his shoulders in play, and what is often the case, when he is at hind angle and threatens to tear his fore shoes off with his hind legs at every stroke, becomes a most helpless brute for every purpose. If he has no aptitude for manners he must be ungainly, but it may be extraordinary goodness that brings all his actions into play as soon as that goodness is roused. Such animals might probably be awkward-looking yearlings, and the first signs of their merit would be when they got into their stride and a spirit of emulation fired them to catch an opponent in a gallop. They may never, however, have

what are called manners in their slow paces. Fisherman used to amble down a course like a coach horse, and Wells often pricked him with the spurs in the preliminary canter to keep him on his legs. When once extended it was another affair altogether, as there was no grander racehorse, or one with a longer stride.

Such thoughts respecting the awkward-looking big ones I have seen, and how many I have thought too big for this and that course, came over me the other day in the Birdcage when receiving Queen Adelaide. I did not like her in the least while she was being walked round the enclosure in front of the weighing stand, as, although not walking crampy or propy, like Scot-free, or Busybody, she moved in a most ungainly fashion. Very big in her body, coarse in her hocks and knees, and with not very shapely feet, she rolled in her walk something like a cow. And yet there was something in her demeanor to commend her, as she was so quiet, and free from all excitement, and knowing what she did as a two-year-old, there was something about her enormous quarters and arms to indicate stride and power when put in motion. I remember how deceived people were over twenty years ago at Chantilly when the great, loose, awkward-looking La Touques sailed home for the French Oaks, and repeated the performance again for the French Derby, and when Doyle hustled her up in the preliminary it seemed by magic that she became converted all at once into a magnificent mover. Often enough also have I condemned others in a similar way, to be rudely awakened by actual results, and the contrast was quite as I have stated it when Queen Adelaide raced out of the Abingdon dip and looked all over the winner until Busybody caught her. Her stride in full stroke is magnificent, and her stride when struggling is indicative of very great excellence.

I am no believer at all in big racehorses being at a disadvantage over a course full of gradients, such as Epsom, for I have seen big, and apparently ungainly ones, do extremely well over much worse courses in that respect. The biggest racehorse I ever saw stood seventeen hands high, and being a well made one in proportion, he was a fine animal. To look at he appeared a tremendous handful for a jockey, but one who rode him told me he was as handy as a pony, and I saw him win a handicap top weight in a field of twenty, over a course with four sharpish turns in it and with a very steep dip and rise. It depends on whether they are handy and such as a jockey can hold together.

Busybody is another sort altogether. She is a bloodlike, beautiful filly, full of quality from end to end. Like all the Newminster family, she is one never likely to carry much flesh, and would not require anything like the amount of training that would be necessary for Queen Adelaide. As regards make and shape, Busybody, to my eye, is simple perfection—not the handsomest mare I have ever seen, but her racing points are so marked. Nothing can be more perfect than the lay of her shoulders and her powerful arms, depth in front, width of loin and length of haunches are all in harmony, and when Tom Cannon really called upon her to beat Queen Adelaide, her movements were like machinery. It is odd that both the famous fillies above named have an awkward way of deporting themselves in their slow paces, and in a different way Busybody is as deceptive as the chestnut, to judge her when walking, as she goes short and slipshod. I saw her walking through High street at Newmarket each morning, and should have pronounced her either tender or stiff all round. It is, however, well known that many of the best racehorses are the poorest movers in their slow paces. They walk carelessly and have no action in in trotting, though when once let out they are like greyhounds from a slip.

The latest report of the discovery of an attempt to assassinate the Czar originated from the fact that a box of American cucumbers was recently landed in that country.

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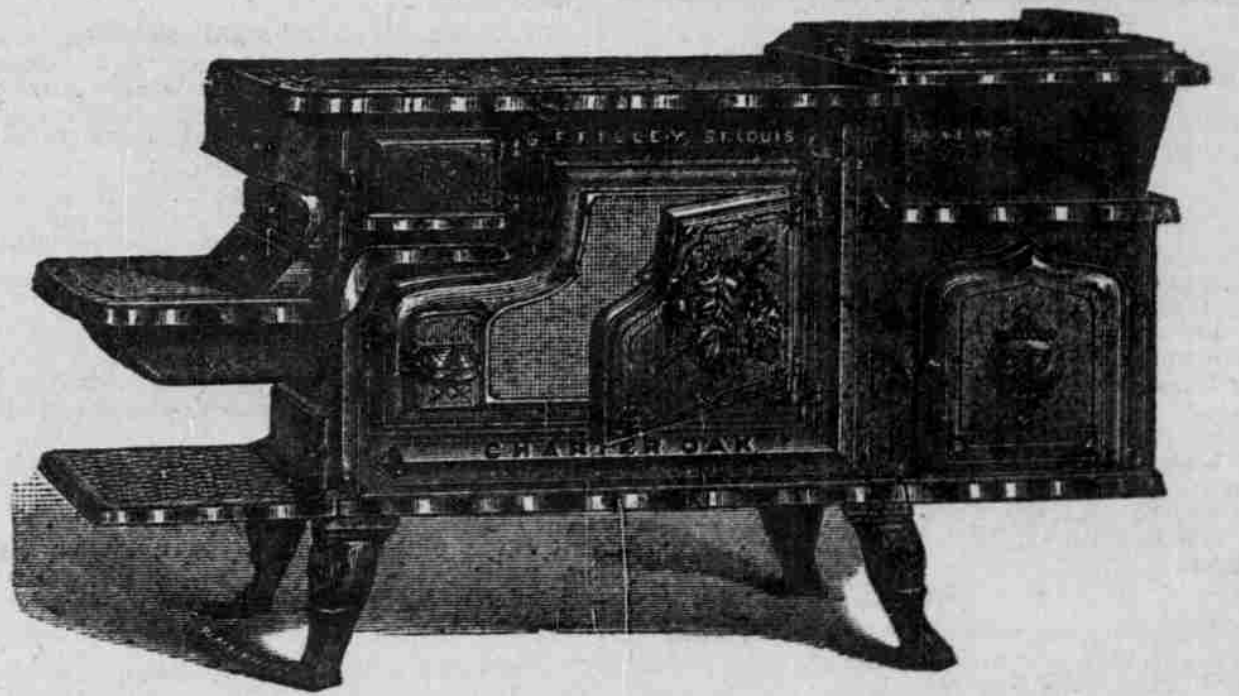
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